

**AN EXTENSIBLE TYPE SYSTEM FOR REPRESENTING AND CHECKING
CONSISTENCY OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS DURING THE PROCESS OF
COMPILATION**

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TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to type systems, and particularly, to a type system that is extensible to new and updated programming languages.

BACKGROUND

10 A type system is a system used in programming languages to aid in the detection and prevention of run-time errors. A programming language is “typed” if it contains a set of types that are declared for objects such as variables, functions, etc., and these types are checked versus a set of rules during compilation of a program written in the language. If the source code written in the typed language violates one 15 of the type rules, a compiler error is determined.

Typed intermediate languages for use in compilers have received significant study in the research community over the past few years. They enhance the reliability and robustness of compilers, as well as provide a systematic way to track and check information needed by garbage collectors. The idea is to have an intermediate 20 representation that has types attached to it and that can be type-checked in a manner analogous to type-checking for source programs. However, a typed intermediate language is more difficult to implement because types that represent items made explicit during the compilation process are necessary.

A typed intermediate language is even more difficult to implement if it must 25 represent a number of different high-level programming languages. The different languages not only have different primitive operations and types, but the high-level programming languages have different levels of typing. For instance, some languages, such as assembly languages, are generally untyped. In other words, they

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have no type system. Of the languages that are typed, some are strongly typed while others are more loosely typed. For instance, C++ is generally considered a loosely typed language, whereas ML or Pascal are considered strongly typed languages.

Further, some languages that are loosely typed have smaller sub-sets of the language
5 that allow for a majority of the code sections within a program to be strongly typed, while other code sections are loosely typed. For example, C# and Microsoft Intermediate Language used in .NET (MSIL) allow this. Therefore, a typed intermediate language used to represent any of these high-level languages must be able to represent different types strengths. Likewise, the type system of such a typed
10 intermediate language must be able to implement different rules depending on characteristics of the code being type checked.

Another problem arises when a typed intermediate language is lowered throughout the process of compilation. The lowering of a language refers to the process of changing the form of a language from a higher level form, such as what a
15 programmer would write, to a lower level, such as to an intermediate language. The language can then be further lowered from the intermediate language to levels closer to what a computer executes, such as machine-dependent native code. In order to type-check an intermediate language that is lowered to different levels during the compilation process, a different set of rules must be used for each representation.

Attempts to create typed intermediate languages often fall short of solving the problems discussed above. For instance, Cedilla Systems' Special J compiler uses a typed intermediate language. However, this compiler is specific to the Java source language and therefore did not need to process multiple languages that may, for instance, have non-type-safe code. Additionally, this compiler only uses one set of
25 rules for type-checking and therefore could not be used for multiple levels of compilation. In the research community, typed intermediate languages often tend to

be highly specific to the source language and difficult to engineer (and design the types) for the multiple stages of compilation.

SUMMARY

- 5 A representation of types, type-checker, method and compiler are provided for checking consistency in various forms of an intermediate language. Specifically, the typed intermediate language is suitable for use in representing programs written in multiple (heterogeneous) source languages including typed and untyped languages, loosely and strongly typed languages, and languages with and without garbage
- 10 collection. Additionally, the type checker architecture is extensible to handle new languages with different types and primitive operations. The representation of types, type-checker, method and compiler include various aspects. The various aspects may be used separately and independently, or the various aspects may be used in various combinations and sub-combinations.
- 15 In one aspect, a method of type-checking a programming language in a compiler is provided. One or more rule sets is taken as input to a type-checker, which selects one or more of the rule sets based upon any one, or combination of two or more, of numerous criteria. Among them are stage of compilation, source language, architecture, and level of typing present in the language being type-checked. The language is then type-checked using the selected one or more rule sets.
- 20 In another aspect, a compiler is provided with a type-checker that constructs one or more sets of rules based on any one, or combination of two or more, of numerous criteria. The rule sets can include one rule set corresponding to strong type-checking, one rule set corresponding to weak type-checking, and one rule set corresponding to representation type-checking. The weak rule set can allow more flexibility in typing, such as allowing type casts, while the representation rule set can allow dropped type information in parts of the intermediate program representation.

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In another aspect, a programming interface is provided for constructing a plurality of rules for checking the consistency of an intermediate representation of a program. Checking the consistency of the intermediate representation can include providing a plurality of rules to a type-checker that applies a first set of rules to a one 5 intermediate representation, and a second set of rules to a another intermediate representation, based on predetermined criteria.

These and other aspects will become apparent from the following detailed description, which makes references to the accompanying drawings.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a flow diagram of a generic compilation process.

FIG. 2 is a table listing showing a conversion of a source code statement into an high-level representation, and then to a machine-dependent low-level representation.

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FIG. 3 is a data flow diagram illustrating one embodiment of a compiler system for type-checking a typed intermediate language at various stages of compilation.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of a type-checker for use in a compiler system.

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FIG. 5 is a flowchart for one possible procedure for choosing a rule set to be applied by a type-checker.

FIG. 6 is a direct graph diagram showing a hierarchical relationship between types.

FIG. 7 is a direct graph diagram showing the addition of a type to a hierarchical relationship between types.

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FIG. 8 is a flow chart of a method for checking an instruction against a type rule in a type-checking system.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram of an example of a computer system that serves as an operating environment for an embodiment of a type-checking system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

- 5 A representation of types, type-checker, and compiler are provided for checking consistency in various forms of an intermediate language. The type-checker and compiler allow use of different types and type-checking rules, depending on the source language for a program component and/or the stage of compilation. For example, it may be desirable to have a high-level optimizer apply to programs written
10 in a variety of languages. These languages may have different primitive types and primitive operations. One language may contain types and operations for complex arithmetic, for example, whereas another language may contain types and operations specific to computer graphics. By allowing the intermediate representation to be parameterized by different type systems, the optimizer can be used for languages with
15 different primitive types and operations. Another example can include a program where certain components are written in a strongly-typed subset of a language and other components are written in the full language, which is not type-safe. It is desirable to have more error checking for the first set of components. This can be accomplished by using different type-checking rules for the different components.
20 Yet another example is dropping type information during compilation. The type-checker and compiler can allow type information to be dropped at later stages, while forcing precise information to be maintained during earlier stages. This can be accomplished by using an unknown type in combination with different type-checking rules for different stages of compilation.

- 25 FIG. 1 shows a generic compilation process for a system utilizing a typed intermediate language with different levels of lowering for representing a number of different source languages. Source code 100-106 is written in four different source

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languages that may or may not be typed and have differing levels of type strength. For instance, source code 100 written in C# will be typed much stronger than source code 106 written in C++ for instance. Source code is first processed and entered into the system by a reader 108. The source language is then translated into a high-level intermediate representation of the typed intermediate language (HIR). The HIR can then optionally be analyzed and optimized at block 110. The HIR is then translated into a mid-level intermediate representation of the typed intermediate language (MIR). This representation is lower than the HIR but still machine independent. At this point, the MIR can optionally be analyzed and optimized as shown at block 112. The MIR is then translated into a machine-dependent low-level representation of the typed intermediate language (LIR) by code generation at block 114. LIR can then optionally be analyzed and optimized at block 116, and supplied to an emitter at block 118. The emitter will output code in one of many formats 120-126 representing the original source code read into the system. Throughout this process, the data necessary to complete the process is stored in some form of persistent memory 128.

Thus, the compilation process consists of transforming the intermediate language instructions from one level of representation to another. For instance, Figure 2 shows the conversion of a source code statement into an HIR, as well as the conversion of the HIR to a machine-dependent LIR. Source code statement 200 can be written in a number of high-level programming languages. These languages are designed to allow programmers to write and read code in a manner that is easily understood. Thus, the programmer is allowed to use characters like '+' for addition, and allowed use of more powerful forms, such as adding more than two operands as shown in statement 200.

Statements 202-206 are an HIR representation of statement 200 that represents the same functionality, but does so in a format closer to that as would be understood

by a computer and yet still architecture independent. Statement 202 uses an ‘ADD’ command to add a first and second variable and assigns the result to a first temporary variable t1. Statement 204 then uses another ‘ADD’ command to add t1 to the third variable and assigns the result to a second temporary variable t2. Statement 206 then 5 assigns the value of t2 to the result variable z using an ‘ASSIGN’ instruction.

Statements 208-212 are a LIR of the intermediate language of the statements 202-206. Statement 208 uses an add instruction specific to the x86 architecture to add the values of two variables stored at specified registers and stores the result in a register assigned to a temporary variable t1. Statement 210 uses the add instruction 10 specific to the x86 architecture to add the values of t1 and a third variable stored at the specified registers and stores the result in the specified register (EAX) assigned to t2. Statement 212 then uses a move instruction specific to the x86 architecture to move the value stored in EAX to the output variable z.

In order to implement type-checking, the typed intermediate language contains 15 type representations expressed either explicitly or implicitly. An explicit type expression is declared directly in the representation. For example, the statement:

int a;

expressly defines the variable ‘a’ as type int. A type representation can be expressed implicitly by defining a default type for certain statements of code. For instance, if 20 the default return type for functions is int, then the statement:

f_start ();

would declare a function f_start that takes no arguments and returns a value of type int.

One embodiment of type representations for a typed intermediate language 25 suitable for use with multiple programming languages at multiple levels of representation is shown in Appendix A. It should be noted that this is only an example of numerous possible embodiments.

- Referring to Appendix A, a number of type representations are defined in a type class hierarchy such that type systems of various languages can be represented by the typed intermediate language. An abstract base class is defined as 'Phx::Type' for all types. The base class can contain, for instance, size information in 'sizekind'
- 5 for the various types, such as actual, symbolic or unknown (or variable) types. The base class can also contain 'typekind' in order to designate type classification. Additionally, an external type can be provided as an abstract type that wraps an externally defined type in order to provide back mapping from the typed intermediate language to the original source code.
- 10 Below the base class, a class defined as 'Phx::PtrType' can represent pointer types. Various kinds of pointers can be defined as well. For instance, a managed, garbage collected pointer (points to a location within a garbage collected object), a managed, non-garbage collected pointer (points to a location within a non-garbage collected object), an unmanaged pointer (such as would be found in code written in
- 15 C++, for instance), a reference pointer (points to the base of a garbage collected object), and null.

At the same level in the hierarchy, a class defined as 'Phx::ContainerType' can represent container types, such as types that contain internal members. The internal members can have fields, methods and other types. A class defined as

20 'Phx::FuncType' can represent function types, including any necessary calling conventions, lists of arguments and lists of return types. Also, a class defined as 'Phx::UnmgdArrayType' can represent unmanaged array types. Under 'Phx::ContainerType' in the hierarchy, four more classes can be defined. A class defined as 'Phx::ClassType' can represent class types, a class defined as

25 'Phx::StructType' can represent struct types, a class defined as 'Phx::InterfaceType' can represent interface types, and a class defined as 'Phx::EnumType' can represent

enumerated types. Under ‘Phx::ClassType’ in the hierarchy, an additional class defined as ‘Phx::MgdArrayType’ can represent managed array types.

In the representations shown in Appendix A, a class ‘primtype’ is defined as a special instance of a struct type. ‘primtype’ can include various types such as int, 5 float, unknown, void, condition code, unsigned int, xint, etc. These representations can be used in both a HIR or LIR of the typed intermediate language.

Additionally, target specific primitive types can be included in the type representation. Some languages have complex arithmetic types that can be handled efficiently if the type system is made aware of them. Take for instance an ‘MMX’ 10 instruction. Such an instruction is one of a set of extra instructions built into some versions of x86 processors for supporting single instruction/multiple data operations on multimedia and communications data types. The type system can be customized to recognize and use these instructions with minimal alteration of the type representations.

15 The embodiment of the type representation of types shown in Appendix A also includes an “unknown” type, which can represent any type and optionally has a size associated with it. The size is the size of the machine representation of the value. An unknown type allows a compiler to drop type information in a controlled manner by changing the type information from a specific type to an unknown type. It allows 20 the compiler to generate code that depends on the size of the value being manipulated, even when the type is unknown. Other types may use unknown types, so the unknown type also allows the representation of partial type information (where some but not all information is known).

For instance, assume a pointer to an int type. At some stage of lowering, it 25 may be desirable to drop the type information, int. The unknown type allows the compiler to replace the int type with the unknown type. The type-checker then need not check that the pointer of interest is pointing to a correct type. It essentially takes

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the chance the value pointed to will be handled in such a manner as to not adversely affect the program functionality at runtime.

- Another example of using an unknown type is for defining a type for a function. If a function with an argument of type pointer to unknown is called, where
- 5 the argument previously had the type pointer to int, the compiler must trust that right type is being passed. The result of dereferencing the pointer may or may not be known to be an int; however, it will be used as an int. A more complex example is the introduction of an intermediate temporary variable during the conversion from high-level to low-level intermediate representation of a virtual function call. Virtual
- 10 tables (vtables) are widely used to implement virtual calls in object-oriented languages. The first step in making a virtual function call in the low-level intermediate representation is to fetch the first field of an object of memory. The first field contains a pointer to a vtable. The result of fetch is then assigned to a temporary variable. Constructing the type of the temporary variable (a type that
- 15 represents a pointer to a vtable, where the vtable may have many fields), may be complex and burdensome to represent. Instead, the compiler may simply assign the intermediate temporary variable “pointer to unknown.” Thus, the use of the unknown type simplifies latter stages of compilation where keeping detailed type information is unnecessary or may represent a significant burden to the compiler implementer.
- 20 FIG. 3 illustrates one embodiment of a compiler system for type-checking a typed intermediate language at various stages of compilation, and therefore, type-checking a typed intermediate language at various levels of lowering. Source code 300 represents any one of a variety of source languages. The source code 300 is translated into a HIR of the typed intermediate language 302. In doing so, the types
- 25 representations of the source language are translated into the type representations internal to the typed intermediate language.

The HIR, as explained with respect to FIGs. 1 and 2, is lowered throughout the compilation process. For purposes of this illustration, a high (HIR) 302, mid (MIR) 304, and low (LIR) 306 level representations are shown. However, the embodiment is not so limited. Any number of stages of compilation may be type-checked.

The intermediate language at each level of representation may be type-checked by type-checker 308. The type-checker 308 implements an algorithm or procedure for applying one or more rule sets 310 to each stage of the compilation process, and therefore to each representation of the intermediate language. The rule sets 310 are a set of rules designed for varying properties of languages, such as the source language, stage of compilation, what strength of typing, etc.

For example, assume source code 300 contains code authored in the C++ programming language. The C++ source code 300 is first translated into an HIR 302 of the typed intermediate language. If desired, at this point the type-checker 308 can interact with the HIR 302 in order to determine any number of properties. Such properties might include the stage of compilation (HIR), the type of source code present (C++), whether or not the language is typed (yes), whether it is loosely or strongly typed (loosely), etc. Based on the properties, the type-checker can select an appropriate set of rules. Once a rule set is selected, the type-checker type-checks the HIR according to that set of rules. Once the HIR is lowered to MIR or LIR, the properties will be accessed again and the same or a different set of rules may be appropriate.

In one embodiment, three sets of type-checking rules can be supplied to the type-checker. One set can correspond to "strong" type-checking, such as would be desirable to type-check C# or MSIL. Another set can correspond to "weak" type-checking, which would be a looser type-checking than the "strong" type-checking. For instance, the weak type-checking rule set could permit type casts. A type cast is

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when a variable of one type is made to act like another for a single use. For instance, a variable of type int can be made to act like a char (character). The following code uses a type cast to print the letter ‘P’.

5 int a;
a = 80;
cout << (char) a;

Thus, even though ‘a’ is defined as type int and assigned the value 80, the cout
10 statement will treat the variable ‘a’ as type char due to the type cast and therefore
display a ‘P’ (ASCII value 80) rather than 80.

Lastly, a set can correspond to “representation” checking. The
“representation” checking can allow dropped type information in parts of the
intermediate program representation, such as by using an unknown type, and can
15 include rules that dictate when such type information can be dropped or when an
unknown type can be substituted for another type. For instance, the result of a
function that returns a value of type Void may be prohibited from being assigned to a
variable of unknown type.

Additionally, more than one set of rules can be used at a single stage of
compilation. For instance, assume the source code 300 contains a single language,
but contains sections that are strongly typed and some sections that are loosely typed.
The type-checker can use one set of rules for the HIR at certain strongly typed
sections, and another set of rules for code sections that are loosely typed.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of a type-checker for use in a compiler system
25 similar to that described in FIG. 3. Type-checker 400 can accept as input any
number of rules sets corresponding to different source languages and/or different
stages of compilation. In FIG. 4, four rules sets 402-408 are provided to type-
checker 400. Rule set 402 represents a rule set for an HIR for languages with strong

typing, rule set 404 represents a rule set for an HIR for languages with weak typing, rule set 406 represents a rule set for an HIR for languages with no typing, and rule set 408 represents a rule set for an LIR. Program module 410 represents a language with strong typing in a HIR, and program module 412 represents program module 5 410 after being lowered to an LIR.

The type-checker 400 selects an appropriate rule set based on properties of the program module being type-checked and applies the selected rule set to the program module using an incorporated procedure or algorithm. For instance, type-checker 400 may select rule set 402 (representing a rule set for an HIR for languages with 10 strong typing) in order to type-check program module 410 (representing a language with strong typing in a HIR). Subsequently, the type-checker 400 may then select rule set 408 (representing a rule set for an LIR) in order to type-check program module 412 (representing a language with strong typing in a LIR).

FIG. 5 is a flowchart for one possible embodiment of a procedure for choosing 15 a rule set to be applied by the type-checker. At block 500, a type-checker reads in a section of a typed intermediate representation of source code and must select a rule set for type-checking. Decision 502 determines if the typed intermediate language is a HIR, MIR, or LIR.

If it is a HIR or MIR, decision 504 is processed to determine if the original 20 source code was loosely or strongly typed. If it was loosely typed, block 506 is processed to select a rule set corresponding to weak type-checking. If it was strongly typed, block 508 is processed to select a rule set corresponding to strong type-checking.

If it is an LIR, decision block 510 is processed to select a rule set 25 corresponding to representation type-checking. It should be noted that FIG. 5 is just one embodiment. Any number of rule sets can be selected, corresponding to and based on different properties.

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The rule sets of the type-checking system described are easily extended to entirely new languages, and also to new features of existing languages. For instance, should a new language be introduced, a new rule set is simply authored for the new language. Since the rule sets are separate from the type-checker or compiler system 5 itself and are designed to accept the rule sets as separate entities, new rule sets for new languages can be distributed without having to re-distribute or update existing type-checking systems or compilers. Likewise, if a new feature is added to an existing language, such as adding XML support to C++ for instance, the rule set corresponding to C++ at the various stages of compilation can be easily 10 reconfigured dynamically to handle the new feature. Again, no new core system need be updated or distributed.

The rule sets can also allow for constraints on types. For instance, whether sub-typing is allowed for a particular type when a class inherits from another may be a constraint described in the rules. Another constraint may be a boxed constraint, 15 such as might be desired to indicate data can be converted into a virtual table containing the data. Others may include a size constraint, or a primitive type constraint indicating the necessity for identical types of primitives. Like any other part of the rule set, new constraints can be added as desired.

The set of rules used by the type-checker can be constructed through a 20 programming interface to an application for authoring the rule sets. The application can construct the rules such that the rule set is represented in a hierarchy of type primitives with rules assigned to individual instructions of the typed intermediate language. The hierarchy can be provided in the form of a type graph that will explicitly express various elements of types relevant to a particular program module 25 or compilation unit. The IR elements such as symbols and operations will be associated with elements of the type systems. The type graph nodes will describe the primitive and constructed types and their relationships such as components, nested

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types, function signatures, interface types, elements of hierarchy and other information such as source names and references to module/assembly external type elements.

An example of a simple type rule is as follows:

5 ADD

N= add n, n

Assume for purpose of this example that I is a signed integer type, U is an unsigned integer type, X is either type of integer, F is float, and N is any of the above. FIG. 6 shows the hierarchical relationship between these types. Type N is at 10 the top of the hierarchy. The types F and X branch down from type N to form the subsequent level of the hierarchy. Lastly, types U and I branch down from the X type to form the lowest level of the hierarchy. Thus, for an 'ADD' intermediate language instruction, according to this rule only type N or lower in the hierarchy can be processed by the add instruction, and the operands must be no higher on the 15 hierarchy than the result. For instance, two integers can be added to produce an integer (I=ADD i, i), or an integer and a float can be added to produce a float (F=ADD i, f). However, a float and an integer cannot be added to produce an integer (I=ADD i, f).

Representing the type primitives as hierarchies allows the rule sets to be 20 altered easily. In the past, type rules have often been expressed programmatically using source code. For example, a type-checker may contain a large number of switch statements that implement the type-checker rules. Thus, changing a rule required modifying the source code for the type-checker. However, the hierarchical rule sets provide for much easier extensibility. Consider the previous rule for the 25 ADD instruction. If a developer wanted to add a type, for instance C for a complex type, it can simply be added under the N type in the hierarchy as shown in FIG. 7 and the rule for the ADD instruction need not be altered to function as desired.

One method for checking an instruction in a type checking system against a type rule is shown in FIG. 8. First, block 800 is processed to check the instruction syntactically. Thus, considering the instruction at 806, the type-checker will ensure that the correct number of source and destination expressions exist according to the 5 type rule for the ADD instruction (for example, in this case there are 2 source expressions and one destination expression). Each expression (and subexpression) may have an explicit type on it in the intermediate representation. At block 802, the type-checker will then actually verify that the explicit types for e1, e2, and foo(e3) conform to the type rule for the ADD instruction. At block 804, the type-checker 10 will traverse sub-levels if necessary to further type-check instructions. For instance, the type-checker can check that the expressions e1, e2, and foo(e3) are consistent with their explicit types. For instance, the type-checker may check that foo has a function type. It may check that the result type of the function type is the same as the explicit type on foo(e3). It may further check that there is a single argument type and that the 15 type e3 matches that type. This ensures that the type of the call to e3 is consistent with type rules.

FIG. 9 illustrates an example of a computer system that serves as an operating environment for an embodiment of a type-checking system. The computer system includes a personal computer 920, including a processing unit 921, a system memory 20 922, and a system bus 923 that interconnects various system components including the system memory to the processing unit 921. The system bus may comprise any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, and a local bus using a bus architecture such as PCI, VESA, Microchannel (MCA), ISA and EISA, to name a few. The system memory includes 25 read only memory (ROM) 924 and random access memory (RAM) 925. A basic input/output system 926 (BIOS), containing the basic routines that help to transfer information between elements within the personal computer 920, such as during start-

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up, is stored in ROM 924. The personal computer 920 further includes a hard disk drive 927, a magnetic disk drive 928, e.g., to read from or write to a removable disk 929, and an optical disk drive 930, e.g., for reading a CD-ROM disk 931 or to read from or write to other optical media. The hard disk drive 927, magnetic disk drive 928, and optical disk drive 930 are connected to the system bus 923 by a hard disk drive interface 932, a magnetic disk drive interface 933, and an optical drive interface 934, respectively. The drives and their associated computer-readable media provide nonvolatile storage of data, data structures, computer-executable instructions (program code such as dynamic link libraries, and executable files), etc. for the personal computer 920. Although the description of computer-readable media above refers to a hard disk, a removable magnetic disk and a CD, it can also include other types of media that are readable by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, Bernoulli cartridges, and the like.

A number of program modules may be stored in the drives and RAM 925, including an operating system 935, one or more application programs 936, other program modules 937, and program data 938. A user may enter commands and information into the personal computer 920 through a keyboard 940 and pointing device, such as a mouse 942. Other input devices (not shown) may include a microphone, joystick, game pad, satellite dish, scanner, or the like. These and other input devices are often connected to the processing unit 921 through a serial port interface 949 that is coupled to the system bus, but may be connected by other interfaces, such as a parallel port, game port or a universal serial bus (USB). A monitor 947 or other type of display device is also connected to the system bus 923 via an interface, such as a display controller or video adapter 948. In addition to the monitor, personal computers typically include other peripheral output devices (not shown), such as speakers and printers.

- The personal computer 920 may operate in a networked environment using logical connections to one or more remote computers, such as a remote computer 949. The remote computer 949 may be a server, a router, a peer device or other common network node, and typically includes many or all of the elements described 5 relative to the personal computer 920, although only a memory storage device 950 has been illustrated in FIG. 9. The logical connections depicted in FIG. 9 include a local area network (LAN) 951 and a wide area network (WAN) 952. Such networking environments are commonplace in offices, enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets and the Internet.
- 10 When used in a LAN networking environment, the personal computer 920 is connected to the local network 951 through a network interface or adapter 953. When used in a WAN networking environment, the personal computer 920 typically includes a modem 954 or other means for establishing communications over the wide area network 952, such as the Internet. The modem 954, which may be internal or 15 external, is connected to the system bus 923 via the serial port interface 946. In a networked environment, program modules depicted relative to the personal computer 920, or portions thereof, may be stored in the remote memory storage device. The network connections shown are merely examples and other means of establishing a communications link between the computers may be used.
- 20 Having illustrated and described the principles of the illustrated embodiments, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the embodiments can be modified in arrangement and detail without departing from such principles.

For instance, one embodiment herein describes one or more rule sets that can be supplied to a type-checker or compiler such that the compiler or type-checker 25 chooses one or more of the rule sets to type-check a language based on the language and/or phase of compilation being type-checked. However, in the alternative, a single set of rules can be supplied to a type-checker or compiler such that the

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compiler or type-checker constructs one or more subsets of rules from the single set of rules, either statically or dynamically at runtime, based on the language and/or phase of compilation being type-checked.

In view of the many possible embodiments, it will be recognized that the 5 illustrated embodiments include only examples and should not be taken as a limitation on the scope of the invention. Rather, the invention is defined by the following claims. We therefore claim as the invention all such embodiments that come within the scope of these claims.

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Appendix A

```

//-----//
// Description:
5 // 
// IR types
// 
// 
// Type Class Hierarchy      Description & Primary Properties Introduced
10 // -----
// Phx::Type          - Abstract base class for types
// Phx::PtrType        - Pointer types
// Phx::ContainerType - Container types (types that have members)
// Phx::ClassType      - Class types
15 //      Phx::MgdArrayType - Managed array types
//      Phx::StructType   - Struct types
//      Phx::InterfaceType - Interface types
//      Phx::EnumType     - Enumerated types
//      Phx::FuncType      - Function types
20 //      Properties: ArgTypes, ReturnType
// 
//      Phx::UnmgdArrayType - Unmanaged arrays
//      Properties: Dim, Referent
// 
25 //-----
//-----//
// Description:
30 // 
// Base class for IR types
// 
//-----//

35 abstract public gc
class Type : public Phx::Object
{
    public:

```

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```

// Functions for comparing types.

    virtual Boolean IsAssignable(Phx::Type * srcType);
    virtual Boolean IsEqual(Phx::Type * type);

5      public:

        // Public Properties

10     DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::TypeKind,           TypeKind,   typeKind);
11     DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::SizeKind,           SizeKind,   sizeKind);
12     DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::BitSize,            BitSize,   bitSize);
13     DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Symbols::ConstSym *, ConstSym, constSym);
14     DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::ExternalType *, ExternalType, externalType);
15     DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::PrimTypeKindNum,   PrimTypeKind,
16                         primTypeKind);
17     GET_PROPERTY(Phx::TypeSystem *, TypeSystem);

20     protected:

21         // Protected Fields

22             Phx::TypeKind      typeKind;      // type classification
23             Phx::SizeKind      sizeKind;      // size classification
24             Phx::BitSize       bitSize;       // size in bits when constant
25             Symbols::ConstSym * constSym;   // size in bits when symbolic
26             Phx::PrimTypeKindNum primTypeKind;
27             Phx::ExternalType * externalType; // optionally null
28         };

30         //-----
31         //
32         // Description:
33         //
34         // Container Type - Abstract class for types that have members.
35         //
36         //-----

40         _abstract __public __gc
41         class ContainerType : public QuantifiedType, public IScope

```

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```
{  
  
    DEFINE_PROPERTY(Symbols::FieldSym *, FieldSymList, fieldSymList);  
5  
private:  
    // Private Fields  
10    Symbols::FieldSym * fieldSymList;  
  
};  
  
//-----  
15 //  
// Description:  
//  
// Class Container Type  
//  
20 //-----  
  
_public __gc  
class ClassType : public ContainerType  
{  
25  
public:  
    // Public Static Constructors  
30    static Phx::ClassType * New  
        (  
            Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,  
            Phx::BitSize          bitSize,  
            Phx::ExternalType *   externalType  
35        );  
  
    public:  
        // Public Properties  
40
```

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```
DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Type *, UnboxedType,      unboxedType);
DEFINE_PROPERTY(  ClassType *, ExtendsClassType, extendsClassType);

5   DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Collections::InterfaceTypeList *,
                      ExplicitlyImplements, explicitlyImplements);

protected:

10  // Protected Properties
    DEFINE_SET_PROPERTY(Phx::Collections::InterfaceTypeList *,
                        ExplicitlyImplements, explicitlyImplements);

15  private:
    // Private Fields

20    Phx::Type *          unboxedType;
    Phx::ClassType *       extendsClassType;
    Phx::Collections::InterfaceTypeList * explicitlyImplements;
    };

25  //-----
//  

// Class: StructType
//  

// Description:
//  

// Type of structs.
30  //
//  

//-----
```

35 public gc
class StructType : public ContainerType
{

public:

40 // Public Static Constructors

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```
static Phx::StructType * New
(
    Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,
5     Phx::BitSize        bitSize,
    Phx::ExternalType *   externalType
);
public:
10    // Public Properties
        DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::ClassType *, BoxedType, boxedType);

15    private:
        // Private Fields
        Phx::ClassType * boxedType;
20    };

25    //-----
//  

// Class: PrimType
// Description:
// Primitive types
//  

30    //-----
```

```
35    public __gc
class PrimType : public StructType
{
public:
    // Public Static Constructors
40    static Phx::PrimType *
```

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```
New
(
    Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,
    Phx::PrimTypeKindNum   primTypeKind,
5     Phx::BitSize          bitSize,
    Phx::ExternalType *    externalType
);

public:
10    // Public Methods

        static Phx::PrimType *
GetScratch
15    (
        Phx::PrimType * type,
        PrimTypeKindNum kind,
        Phx::BitSize bitSize
    );
20    Phx::PrimType * GetResized
    (
        Phx::BitSize bitSize
    );
25    public:
        // Public Properties
30    DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::TypeSystem *, TypeSystem, typeSystem);

private:
        // Private Fields
35    Phx::TypeSystem * typeSystem;
};

//-----
```

40 //

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```
// Class: InterfaceType
//
// Description:
//
5 //  Interface types
//
//-----
```

10 public __gc
class InterfaceType : public ContainerType
{

15 public:

15 // Public Static Constructors

20 static Phx::InterfaceType * New
(
 Phx::TypeSystem * typeSystem,
 Phx::ExternalType * externalType
)

25 public:

25 // Public Properties

30 DEFINE_PROPERTY(Phx::ClassType *, ExtendsClassType,
extendsClassType);
 DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Collections::InterfaceTypeList *,
ExplicitlyImplements, explicitlyImplements);

35 protected:

35 // Protected Properties

35 DEFINE_SET_PROPERTY(Phx::Collections::InterfaceTypeList *,
ExplicitlyImplements, explicitlyImplements);

40 private:

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```
// Private Fields

    Phx::ClassType *           extendsClassType;
    Phx::Collections::InterfaceTypeList * explicitlyImplements;
5   };

//-----
//  

// Class: EnumType
10  //
// Description:
//  

// Enumeration types
//  

15  //

-----  

_public _gc
class EnumType : public ContainerType
{
20
public:  

    // Public Static Constructors

25    static Phx::EnumType * New
    (
        Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,
        Phx::ExternalType *    externalType,
        Phx::Type *            underLyngType
30    );
  

public:  

    // Public Properties

35    DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::ClassType *, BoxedType, boxedType);
    DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Type *, UnderlyingType, underlyingType);

private:
40
```

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```
// Private Fields

Phx::Type * underlyingType;
Phx::ClassType * boxedType;
5   };

//-----
//  

// Class: MgdArrayType
10  //
// Description:
//  

//   Managed array types.
//  

15  //
//-----  

  

20  public gc
class MgdArrayType : public ClassType
{
public:  

    // Public Static Constructors
25
    static Phx::MgdArrayType * New
    (
        Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,
        Phx::ExternalType *    externalType,
30
        Phx::Type *            elementType
    );
  

    public:  

35    // Public Properties
  

        DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Type *, ElementType, elementType);
  

    private:
40
```

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```
// Private Fields

    Phx::Type * elementType;
};

5 //-----
//  

// Class: UnmgdArrayType
//  

10 // Description:
//  

//    Unmanaged array types.
//  

//  

15 //-----

    public __gc
class UnmgdArrayType : public Type
{
20
public:

    // Public Static Constructors

25    static Phx::UnmgdArrayType * New
    (
        Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,
        Phx::BitSize           bitSize,
        Phx::ExternalType *    externalType,
30        Phx::Type *           referentType
    );

public:

35    // Public Properties

        DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(int,      Dim,      dim);
        DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Type *, Referent, referent);

40    private:
```

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```
// Private Fields

5      int      dim;
      Phx::Type * referent;
};

10     //-----
10     //
10     // Description:
10     //
10     //  Pointer types
10     //
15     //
15     //-----

20     public __gc
class PtrType : public Type
20     {

public:

25     // Public Static Constructors
25
25     static Phx::PtrType * New
25     (
25         Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,
25         Phx::PtrTypeKind       ptrTypeKind,
30         Phx::BitSize           bitSize,
25         Phx::Type *             referent,
25         Phx::ExternalType *    externalType
25     );
35     // Constructor without type pointed to.

35     static Phx::PtrType * New
35     (
35         Phx::TypeSystem *      typeSystem,
40         Phx::PtrTypeKind       ptrTypeKind,
```

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```
    Phx::BitSize      bitSize,
    Phx::ExternalType *   externalType
);

5  public:
    // Public Properties

10  DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::PtrTypeKind,  PtrTypeKind,  ptrTypeKind);
    DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Type *,       Referent,     referent);

private:
    // Private Fields
15  Phx::PtrTypeKind  ptrTypeKind;
    Phx::Type *        referent;
};

20 //-----
//  

// Enum: CallingConvention
//  

// Description:
25 //
// A preliminary enum to represent calling convention types.
//  

//-----

30 BEGIN_ENUM(CallingConventionKind)
{
    _Illegal = 0,
    _CLRCall,
    CDecl,
35    StdCall,
    ThisCall,
    FastCall
}
END_ENUM(CallingConventionKind);

40
```

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```
//-----  
//  
// Class: FuncType  
//  
5 // Description:  
//  
// Function types.  
//  
//  
10 //-----  
  
_public __gc  
class FuncType : public QuantifiedType  
{  
15  
public:  
  
    // Public Static Constructors  
  
20    public:  
  
        // Public Methods  
  
        Int32      CountArgs();  
25        Int32      CountRets();  
        Int32      CountArgsForInstr();  
        Int32      CountRetsForInstr();  
        Int32      CountUserDefinedArgs();  
        Int32      CountUserDefinedRets();  
30        Phx::FuncArg * GetNthArgFuncArg(Int32 index);  
        Phx::FuncArg * GetNthRetFuncArg(Int32 index);  
        Phx::FuncArg * GetNthArgFuncArgForInstr(Int32 index);  
        Phx::FuncArg * GetNthRetFuncArgForInstr(Int32 index);  
        Phx::FuncArg * GetNthUserDefinedArgFuncArg(Int32 index);  
35        Phx::FuncArg * GetNthUserDefinedRetFuncArg(Int32 index);  
        Phx::Type *   GetNthArgType(Int32 index);  
        Phx::Type *   GetNthRetType(Int32 index);  
        Phx::Type *   GetNthArgTypeForInstr(Int32 index);  
        Phx::Type *   GetNthRetTypeForInstr(Int32 index);  
40        Phx::Type *   GetNthUserDefinedArgType(Int32 index);
```

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```
Phx::Type * GetNthUserDefinedRetType(Int32 index);

public:

5   // Public Properties

    DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::CallingConventionKind,      CallingConvention,
callingConvention);
    GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Type *,   RetType);

10  // True if this function type has an ellipsis funcarg.

    GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      IsVarArgs);
    GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      IsInstanceMethod);
15  GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      IsClrCall);
    GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      IsCDecl);
    GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      IsStdCall);
    GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      IsThisCall);
    GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      IsFastCall);

20  // Not True if this function has a return value.

    GET_PROPERTY(Boolean,      ReturnsVoid);

25  protected:

    // Protected Fields

    Phx::CallingConventionKind  callingConvention;
30  Phx::FuncArg *           argFuncArgs;
    Phx::FuncArg *           retFuncArgs;
};

//-----
35 //
// Description:
//
//   The global type system used during compilation.
//
40 //
```

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//-----

```
5   public gc
    class TypeSystem : public Phx::Object
  {
10  public:
    // Public Static Constructors
15  static TypeSystem *
    New
    (
      Phx::BitSize    regIntBitSize,
      Phx::BitSize    nativeIntBitSize,
      Phx::BitSize    nativePtrBitSize,
      Phx::BitSize    nativeFloatBitSize,
    );
20  public:
    // Public Methods
25  void Add(Type * type);
    public:
        // lists of created types
30  DEFINE_GET_PROPERTY(Phx::Type *, AllTypes,      allTypes);

    private:
        // List of all types in the system.
35  Phx::Type * allTypes;
  };

//-----
```

40 //

```
// Description:  
//  
// Various enums to describe types.  
//  
5 //-----  
  
// Classes and value types for IR types  
  
// The different kinds of types.  
10 BEGIN_ENUM(TypeKind)  
{  
    _Illegal = 0,  
    Class,  
15    Struct,  
    Interface,  
    Enum,  
    MgdArray,  
    UnmgdArray,  
20    Ptr,  
    Func,  
    Variable,  
    Quantifier,  
    Application,  
25    TypedRef,  
}  
END_ENUM(TypeKind);  
  
// The different kinds of type sizes.  
30 BEGIN_ENUM(SizeKind)  
{  
    _Illegal = 0,  
    Constant,  
35    Symbolic,  
    Unknown  
}  
END_ENUM(SizeKind);  
  
40 // The different types of pointers
```

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```
BEGIN_ENUM(PtrTypeKind)
{
    _Illegal = 0,
5     ObjPtr,           // __gc pointer to object whole.
    MgdPtr,           // __gc pointer to object interior.
    UnmgdPtr,         // __nogc pointer.
    NullPtr,          // pointer to nothing.
    _NumPtrTypeKinds
10 }
END_ENUM(PtrTypeKind);
}
```